

**Grant Review Score Sheet**

<b>Applicant:</b>		<b>Reviewer:</b>	
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Scoring	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Excellent</b> — Highest probability the requirements will be met and <u>exceeded</u>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goes beyond what was requested, showing that the applicant has anticipated issues that may arise.</li> <li>• Provides a thorough, detailed response to all of the information requested.</li> <li>• Provides a clear and highly compelling description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.</li> <li>• Supports ideas and objectives with comprehensive plans explaining and connecting ideas to objectives.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Good</b> — High probability the requirements will be met, and with <u>some exceeded</u>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a response to all of the information requested.</li> <li>• Provides a realistic description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.</li> <li>• Explains most assumptions and reasons.</li> <li>• Supports ideas with plans, examples, or outlines.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Acceptable</b> — Adequate probability the requirements will be <u>met</u>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covers most of the information requested, with a few exceptions.</li> <li>• Is sometimes unclear how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.</li> <li>• Makes some assumptions and leaves some reasons unexplained.</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<p><b>Not Acceptable</b> — <u>Less than adequate</u> probability the requirements will be met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives an unclear description of how the proposed activities will achieve the anticipated results.</li> <li>• Tends to —parrot back the question, rather than answer and explain it.</li> <li>• Does not address or respond to the requirements/conditions of the NOFO.</li> <li>• Proposes activities that are not consistent with the NOFO and Application Instructions.</li> <li>• Does not provide one or more key pieces of requested information.</li> </ul>

## Funding Priorities

In alignment with the Serve America act funding for AmeriCorps programs is targeted toward six Focus Areas identified by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

### CNCS Focus Areas:

- ☐ Disaster Services
- ☐ Economic Opportunity
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Environmental Stewardship
- ☐ Healthy Futures
- ☐ Veterans and Military Families

Within each of the defined Focus Areas the Montana Commission on Community Service has identified three initiatives to be addressed through AmeriCorps service in the State. Applications demonstrating efforts toward addressing one or more of the Montana initiatives should be treated with priority when compared to an equal application not addressing any of the initiatives.

### Montana Initiatives:

- ☐ Generate volunteers
- ☐ Develop Montanans to be college and career ready
- ☐ Support the Governor's initiatives

All programs operating in Montana must address all of the Montana Expectations in their application and execution.

### Montana Expectations:

- ✓ Inclusion in the design and delivery making the program accessible to individuals with disabilities
- ✓ Collaborative approach to planning, design, and the delivery of the program
- ✓ Successful administration of an AmeriCorps and or other federal grants
- ✓ Address rural, underserved or areas of extreme poverty not currently served by AmeriCorps
- ✓ AmeriCorps members trained and prepared to respond to disasters in their community

## Section I. Program Design – 40%

In assessing Program Design, reviewers will examine the degree to which the applicant demonstrates how AmeriCorps members are particularly well-suited to solving the identified community problem.

Reviewers will consider the extent to which:

-Recompeting grantees describe their efforts and impact to date, and provide persuasive evidence they should continue to be funded.

-New applicants already working to meet the community need identified in the application have described how the proposed use of AmeriCorps members will be more effective than what is currently being implemented or enhance existing efforts.

In assessing how you will meet the criteria, reviewers will consider the quality of your response to the following:

2012 AmeriCorps Application	SCORE (0-3)	Comments (Strengths and Weaknesses)
<b>a. Need</b> Provide persuasive evidence that the identified needs exist in the targeted community(ies). Describe the community problem(s) you will be working on. Provide documentation of the extent/severity of the need in the target community. Describe the target community including whether it is economically disadvantaged. Explain why did you selected this population to be served?		
<b>b. AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems.</b> What will members do? Give examples of specific proposed member activities. What will the organization accomplish that it would not otherwise accomplish through existing staff and/or volunteers? How many AmeriCorps members are you requesting? What types of slots (service terms) are needed for these members? If you are requesting different slot types, explain how the different slot types align with your program design and activities.		
<b>c. Evidence-Based/Evidence-Informed and Measurable Community Impact</b> Describe how the interventions the AmeriCorps members and volunteers are engaged in are both evidence-based or evidence-informed and will have a measurable community impact. Explain the impact of the AmeriCorps investment. The intervention is evidence-based if programs can demonstrate community impact and solve community problems through an evidence-based approach (e.g. based on research or backed by statistically significant evaluation findings). The intervention is evidence-informed if programs can demonstrate community impact and solve community problems through an evidence-informed approach (e.g. internal performance data, theory of change based on research).  What is the overall change you expect or plan to see by the end of the three-year grant cycle? What demonstrable impact will your program have? How will you measure that impact? How will you report on this on an annual basis? How did you determine your performance measure targets?		
<b>For Current Grantees Only</b> Describe your performance against objectives during your last full year of program operation. What impact has your program had? How successful have you been in solving the identified problem? If you did not meet performance targets, provide an explanation and describe your plan for improvement. What is the performance measure data collected thus far?		

<p><b>d. Member Recruitment</b></p> <p>Describe your plans for recruiting members for your program. Describe how members will be included from the local communities to be served by your program. Describe how your organization will be recruiting and engaging traditionally underrepresented populations as well as your history with working with those populations or how you will ensure success if this is a new population being recruited. Underrepresented populations may include new Americans, low-income individuals, youth from disadvantaged backgrounds (sometimes also referred to as “opportunity youth”), rural residents, older Americans, veterans, people of color, Native Americans and people with disabilities.</p>		
<p><b>e. Member Training</b></p> <p>Describe your plan for orienting members to AmeriCorps, the community they are serving, their placement site, and the service they will perform. Describe what skills the member will acquire during their term of service. Describe how you will ensure that training provided to members will prepare members to perform all the activities they will engage in during their term of service. Describe, as necessary, the ongoing training provided to members throughout their terms. What are the anticipated training topics and the timeline for member training? How and when will you ensure that members and generated volunteers are aware of and are adhering to the rules regarding prohibited activities?</p>		
<p><b>f. Member Supervision</b></p> <p>Describe your plan for supervising members, and how the plan ensures that members will receive adequate support and guidance throughout their terms. Who will supervise the AmeriCorps members? Describe how supervisors are selected and trained. Describe how your program provides training, oversight, and support to supervisors.</p>		
<p><b>Tutoring Programs Only</b></p> <p>If you are proposing to operate a tutoring program, describe how your program complies with AmeriCorps requirements for member tutoring qualifications. Members who tutor must have a high school diploma, and successfully complete high-quality, research-based pre- and in-service training for tutors. This requirement does not apply to a member enrolled in a secondary school who is providing tutoring through a structured, school-managed cross-grade tutoring program.</p> <p>Describe how your strategy for training members complies with AmeriCorps requirements for member tutor training that is high quality and research based, consistent with the instructional program of the local agency and with state academic content standards (See Section 1111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311)), includes appropriate member supervision by individuals with expertise in tutoring, and provides specialized pre-service and in-service training consistent with the activities the member will perform.</p>		
<p><b>g. Member Experience</b></p> <p>Describe the program components that enable the AmeriCorps members to have powerful service experiences that produce community impact and lead to continued civic participation and connectivity with other AmeriCorps and national service participants.</p> <p>Demonstrate how you will provide structured opportunities for participants to reflect on and learn from their service. Describe how your program will ensure that members are aware they are AmeriCorps members and identify as such to community members, partners, and the general public. Describe how you will connect your members with each other, with other AmeriCorps members and national service participants in the local communities in which they serve, and with other AmeriCorps and national service participants in the state, and/or nationally. How will your program foster a sense of connection with the AmeriCorps identity?</p>		

<b>h. Volunteer Generation</b> Describe how the proposed program will recruit volunteers to expand the reach/impact of the program in the community. How will volunteers help meet the identified community needs and what will be their role(s)? What role will AmeriCorps members have in volunteer recruitment and management? How will your program ensure that volunteers will not be recruited for or engaged in prohibited or unallowable activities? If volunteer generation is not possible due to your program design, please request a waiver of the requirement to recruit or support volunteers (see 45 CFR § 2520.35), enter the rationale in the waiver justification field. Your program will not be penalized for its inability to recruit or support volunteers.			
<b>i. Organizational Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification</b> Describe your organizational commitment to branding national service. How will your program ensure that it and any subgrantees and/or affiliates and/or service locations will use the AmeriCorps name on websites, service gear and public materials such as stationery, application forms, recruitment brochures, on-line position posting, or other recruitment strategies, orientation materials, member curriculum, signs, banners, press releases and publications related to their AmeriCorps program?			
Total	0	Of Possible	27

## Section II. Organizational Capability – 20%

In assessing how you will meet the criteria, reviewers will consider the quality of your response to the following:

2012 AmeriCorps Application	SCORE (0-3)	Comments (Strengths and Weaknesses)
<b>Special Circumstances</b> In applying the organizational capability criteria, reviewers may also take into account the following circumstances of individual organizations: the age of your organization and its rate of growth; and whether your organization serves a resource-poor community, such as a rural or remote community, a community with a high poverty rate, or a community with a scarcity of philanthropic and corporate resources.		
<b>a. Organizational Background and Staffing</b> Provide the organization's mission and a brief history. Describe how the organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program. Who will staff the AmeriCorps program and what is their specific role? What is their relevant experience? If positions are currently vacant, please describe the desired qualifications for each open position. What are your plans for providing financial and programmatic orientation and training and technical assistance to staff? Describe the organization's capacity to provide training and skills development for members. Describe the organization's capacity to complete an evaluation or provide support to an external evaluator. Describe your organization's prior experience administering AmeriCorps grants or other federal funds. Describe your organization's management structure and how the board of directors (if applicable), administrators, and staff members will support your program.		
<b>For Current Grantees Only:</b> Describe how your AmeriCorps program is integrated and supported within your organization. Provide evidence that you have managed the program well, have performed satisfactorily, and have a record of compliance and responsiveness.		
<b>b. Sustainability</b> Describe how the organization has secured, or describe an effective plan for securing, the financial and in-kind resources necessary to support program implementation and to demonstrate community stakeholder support. Describe your organization's experience raising funds to support service activities and initiatives. How will that contribute to long-term sustainability?  Outline your plans for ensuring that the impact of your program in the community is sustainable beyond the grant period. For example, you might describe how your community relationships will lead to community investment in the program's continued operation; how you will diversify your funding sources to include a wide range of stakeholders (such as state, local, and private sector funding); how your strategies for recruiting and supporting volunteers will sustain member activities after your AmeriCorps grant ends; or how the community will maintain your project once it is completed.  Who are your community stakeholders and partners? How are they involved in planning and implementing the proposed program? How will their involvement contribute to long-term sustainability?		

<p><b>c. Compliance and Accountability</b></p> <p>What are your plans for monitoring program and service sites for compliance? Describe how the organization has the ability and structure to ensure its and its subgrantees and/or service site locations' compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited activities. How will your organization ensure compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations at the grantee, subgrantee, and service site locations (if applicable)? How will your organization prevent and detect compliance issues in general and specifically as it relates to prohibited activities? How will your organization hold itself, subgrantees, and service site locations (if applicable) accountable if instances of risk or noncompliance are identified?</p> <p><i>Operating Sites and Member Service Sites</i></p> <p>Identify your proposed operating sites and member service sites. Describe your process for selecting operating and service sites and ensuring they have adequate programmatic and financial capabilities to succeed. How will your site selection process incorporate the criteria required by the AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR §2522.475 (quality, innovation, sustainability, quality of leadership, past performance, community involvement), and the special considerations found in 45 CFR §2522.450 (program models, program activities and programs supporting distressed communities)? What are your current or previous programmatic and funding relationships with the sites? If member service sites are not yet known, describe your timeline for selecting service sites.</p>		
<p><b>Current and Previous Grantees only</b></p> <p><b>Demonstrated Compliance:</b> Describe any compliance issues and areas of weakness/risk identified during your last full year of program operation at your organization, your subgrantees, and service site locations (if applicable). If you, your subgrantees, and/or service site locations (if applicable) had compliance or areas of weakness/risk identified, provide an explanation and describe the corrective action taken and your plan for improvement.</p> <p><b>Enrollment:</b> If you enrolled less than 100% of the slots received during your last full year of program operation, provide an explanation, and describe your plan for improvement. Enrollment rate is calculated as slots filled plus refill slots filled divided by slots awarded.</p> <p><b>Retention:</b> If you were not able to retain all of your members during your last full year of program operation, provide an explanation, and describe your plan for improvement. While we recognize retention rates may vary among equally effective programs depending on the program model, we expect grantees to pursue the highest retention rate possible. Retention rate is calculated as the number of members exited with award (full or partial award) divided by the number of members enrolled.</p>		
<p><b>Section Total</b></p>	<p><b>0</b></p>	<p><b>Of possible 9</b></p>

### Section III. Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy – 20%

In assessing how you will meet the criteria, reviewers will consider the quality of your response to the following:

2012 AmeriCorps Application	SCORE (0-3)	Comments (Strengths and Weaknesses)
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#### Cost-Reimbursement Grants

##### a. Cost Effectiveness

Explain how the budget is cost effective. Explain how the requested funds do not exceed the maximum cost per Member Service Year (MSY) or for existing programs, have not increased over previous years. The amount requested is a competitive factor in the selection process.

Please list all sources of organizational funding and what percent the proposed AmeriCorps project represents in your budget. If you have received support from CNCS during the last five years, please specify what type of support you received. What percentage of your total operational budget does your proposed funding request from CNCS represent?

Demonstrate how your program has or will obtain diverse resources for program implementation. Indicate how much funding your program needs from non-CNCS sources to support the project. Indicate the non-CNCS resource commitments (in-kind and cash) that you have obtained to date and the sources of these funds. Indicate what additional commitments you plan to secure, and how you will secure them.

Discuss how your program is a cost effective approach for addressing the community need(s) identified in your application. Consider the total costs and benefits of the program and, to the extent possible, document the costs and benefits. Compare the cost effectiveness of the program with the costs and benefits of alternative models or approaches (if available), and demonstrate how your program model is most cost effective.

Programs will be evaluated based upon their ability to maximize their return on investment; applicants with a program design that achieves equal results at a lower cost will be advantaged over programs that achieve similar results at a higher cost.

##### Special Circumstances

In applying the cost-effectiveness criteria, CNCS may take into account the following circumstances of individual programs: program age, the extent to which your program expands to new sites; whether your program or project is located in a resource-poor community, such as a rural or remote community, a community with a high poverty rate, or a community with a scarcity of corporate or philanthropic resources; whether your program or project is located in a high-cost, economically distressed community, measured by applying appropriate Federal and State data; and whether the reasonable and necessary costs of your program or project are higher because they are associated with engaging or serving difficult-to-reach populations, or achieving greater program impact as evidenced through performance measures and program evaluation.

If you feel that any of the circumstances stated above have an impact on your organizational capability that has not already been discussed, please describe the circumstance and how it affects your cost effectiveness.

##### For Current Grantees Only:

Describe the extent to which you are increasing your share of costs to meet or exceed program goals, or the extent to which you are proposing deeper impact or broader reach without a commensurate increase in Federal funds.



<b>b. Budget Adequacy</b> Explain how the budget is clear, reasonable, and in alignment with the program narrative. Discuss the adequacy of your budget to support your program design including how it is sufficient to support your program activities and desired outputs and outcomes. Please explain how the cost of criminal history checks and FBI checks, if applicable, are covered if they are not included in the budget.		
<p><b>For EAPs and other Fixed Amount grants Only:</b></p> <p>The extent to which a current grantee is increasing its share of costs will not be considered in assessing a fixed-amount application. However, all other indicators described under Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy apply and it will be weighted 20% of the total application.</p> <p>Discuss how you will raise the additional resources you will need to manage and operate an AmeriCorps program beyond the fixed amount. Identify the total amount you have budgeted to operate the program, including the fixed-amount from the CNCS and grantee share and how your program determined that amount. Keep in mind that full-time AmeriCorps program costs include expenditures for the AmeriCorps living allowance, health care, and criminal history checks. Education Award Programs are not required to pay living allowances or cover health care for less-than-full-time members, but must conduct criminal history checks.</p> <p>Discuss how your program is a cost effective approach for addressing the community need(s) identified in your application. Consider the total costs and benefits of the program and, to the extent possible, document the costs and benefits. Compare the cost effectiveness of the program with the costs and benefits of alternative models or approaches (if available), and demonstrate how your program model is most cost effective.</p> <p>You will not be required to track or report on your expenditures. However, you must demonstrate that you have planned for total costs. Reviewers will assess the adequacy of your plan to secure resources to support your program design.</p>		
Section Total	0	Of possible 6

### Section IV. Staff Assessment – 20%

This section will be based on the information is pulled from previous grant years (2011 and 2012).

#### A. Previous grantees only - 12 Possible Points

2012 Staff Application Assessment	Score (0-3)	Comments (Strengths and Weaknesses)
<b>Based upon the staff assessment</b>		
a. Has the program met their match requirements? (YES = 3 / NO = 0)		
b. Has the program had any significant compliance findings or repeat findings? If yes, were the findings resolved? (YES = 0 / YES & Resolved = 1 / NO = 3)		
c. Has the program completed enrollments/exits within 30 Days? (YES = 3 / NO = 0)		
d. Has the program met all CNCS and OCS deadlines? (YES = 3 / NO = 0)		
Total	0	Of possible 12

**B. New grantees only - 6 Possible Points**

2012 Staff Application Assessment		Score (0-3)	Comments (Strengths and Weaknesses)
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**Based upon the staff assessment**

a. Did the applicant provide evidence of their ability to meet match? (YES = 3 / NO = 0)		
b. Did the applicant provide evidence of their capacity to manage an AmeriCorps Grant? (YES = 3 / NO = 0)		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Of Possible 0</b>

<b>Section IV Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Of Possible 12</b>
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Reviewer Score									
<b>I. Program Design - 40%</b>									
Section Total	0			Of Possible	27	Section Percent	0%		
Section Percent	0%	X	40	=	0.00	Section Final			
<b>II. Organizational Capacity - 20%</b>									
Section Total	0			Of Possible	9	Section Percent	0%		
Section Percent	0%	X	20	=	0.00	Section Final			
<b>III. Cost Effectiveness of Budget - 20%</b>									
Section Total	0			Of Possible	6	Section Percent	0%		
Section Percent	0%	X	20	=	0.00	Section Final			
<b>IV. Staff Assessment - 20%</b>									
Section Total	0			Of Possible	12	Section Percent	0%		
Section Percent	0%	X	20	=	0.00	Section Final			

<b>Final Score</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Of 100</b>
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# Interview Information

Interview Questions

Interview Comments